

St. Stephen's Church
114 George Street
Providence
Providence County
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-189

HABS
RI,
4-PROV,
89-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. RI-189

ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH

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RI,
4-PROV,
89-

Address: 114 George Street, Providence, Providence County,
Rhode Island.

Present Owner
and Occupant: St. Stephen's Church

Present Use: Episcopal church.

Brief Statement
of Significance: This Gothic Revival, stone church built in the
1860's, is an example of Richard Upjohn's later
work.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: St. Stephen's Church.
2. Date of erection: Cornerstone, September 21, 1860;
consecration, February 27, 1862.
3. Architect: Richard Upjohn
4. Notes on alterations and additions: The present rood
screen was designed in the 1880's probably, by the
Boston architect Henry Vaughan American Architect and
Building News, No. 399 (August 18, 1883) /. The spire
was added later, designed by Hoppin and Field Cady,
Civic and Architectural Development of Providence, p. 137 /.
5. Sources of information: American Architect and Building
News, No. 399 (August, 1883), one plate showing a per-
spective and elevation of the rood screen and choir seats
designed by Henry Vaughan, architect, 10 Pemberton Square,
Boston.
John Hutchins Cady, The Civic and Architectural Develop-
ment of Providence 1636-1950 (Providence, Rhode Island:
The Book Shop, 1957), p. 137.
Henry Russell Hitchcock, Jr., Rhode Island Architecture
(Providence: Rhode Island Museum Press, 1939), p. 48.

Everard M. Upjohn, Richard Upjohn, Architect and Churchman
(New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), pp. 177-178.

B. Supplemental Material

Upjohn, Richard Upjohn, Architect and Churchman, says of St. Stephen's, " . . . one can only feel that this church, . . . is not more than a good average illustration of Upjohn's later work, when his buildings, though tolerable, do not have quite the distinction of his early maturity."

Hitchcock, Rhode Island Architecture says, " . . . to whose /St. Stephen's/ broken and picturesque massing the more developed Victorian taste of Upjohn's son /Richard M. Upjohn/ doubtless contributed."

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: Built 1860-1862, this is a moderately large, stone, Gothic Revival church with a rather broken and picturesque silhouette, designed by Richard Upjohn.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: Large rectangular building, about 120' (east-west) x 100', with slightly projecting tower at southeast and entrance narthex at southwest corner facing south toward the street.
2. Foundations: Granite.
3. Wall construction: Buttressed walls of regular coursed ashlar, Smithfield stone, slightly warm gray granite, rather smooth faced. Brownstone trim for belt courses, gable copings, door and window frames, and pinnacles.
4. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Main entrance doorway in pointed brownstone arch with trefoil tympanum window, two pairs of oak doors carved with figures in Gothic niches.
 - b. Windows: Large pointed aisle and clerestory windows divided by stone mullions, filled with painted glass.

5. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Steep gable roofs, tile covering in contrasting bands of pale-green and reddish-brown.
- b. Tower: Square tower rises one high story above adjacent eave line with pinnacles at the four corners and a taller green copper spire.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Gothic nave, five bays long, single aisles, apsidal choir and chancel at east end. A chapel is parallel to the nave on the south side and separated from it only by a glazed, Gothic arcade. A square narthex at the southwest corner leads directly into both the chapel and the main nave.
2. Flooring: Square ceramic tile in the main church, wood and tile in the nave.
3. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster walls, painted. Exposed wood roof trusses, wood ceilings, stained a dark color. High paneled wood wainscot, Gothic moldings, stained a dark color, chancel ceiling painted blue with gold stars and bands. The Nave arcade and the arcade separating the chapel from the main church have rather simple Gothic detail with either round or octagonal columns without bases.
4. Doorways and doors: Paneled interior doors and molded doorways match the wainscoting.
5. Trim: The choir is separated from the nave by an elaborate carved, wood rood screen; a carved paneled wood pulpit stands outside the choir in the nave; an elaborately carved, marble baptismal font stands at the rear of the south aisle near the entrance from the narthex. Low pews with molded top rails. Clerestory and aisle windows have label moldings. Drip molding separates clerestory from top of nave arcade.
6. Hardware: Simple brass hardware.
7. Lighting: Electric in lanterns that hang from the arches of the nave arcades, and from brackets on the trusses of the chapel.
8. Heating: Central hot air.

D. Site

The church is on the north side of the street in the middle of the block, slight slope down toward the east, building set back slightly from the sidewalk with planted area, iron fence with stone posts, parish house attached at west end.

Prepared by Osmund R. Overby, Architect
National Park Service
January 1962.